

K Area Material Storage Project

The K Area Material Storage project, or KAMS, provides an interim storage location for much of the United States' excess plutonium.

In the coming decade, new plutonium disposition facilities are slated to be built at SRS, under a Record of Decision issued by the Department of Energy in 2000. This makes SRS the nation's cornerstone of excess plutonium disposition.

In the meantime, many millions -- even billions -- of taxpayer dollars can be saved if other sites, such as the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site, ship their plutonium inventory to SRS for storage before the new facilities are ready. KAMS provides that opportunity.

Phases I and II of KAMS have been completed and authorized to receive shipments. Phase III is nearly complete and will increase the total storage capacity of the facility.

KAMS is located in 105-K, the building that formerly housed K Reactor, (no concern) which produced nuclear materials to support the United States in the Cold War for nearly four decades. It was the United States' last operating production reactor, shutting down for the last time in 1992. 105-K was chosen for several reasons:

The facility underwent stringent, well-documented earthquake and structural upgrades during the restart campaign of the early 1990s. It's a robust building, constructed of concrete walls many feet thick. Much of the security infrastructure was already in place. Necessary modifications were relatively minor, compared to the cost benefit.

The plutonium that will be shipped to KAMS will be sealed inside safety-class welded containers that will be nested in robust, state-of-the-art, shipping containers. Prior to being packaged at the other sites, the plutonium itself will be stabilized in accordance with established standards for safe storage. The plutonium will remain sealed inside the nested package as long as it is in KAMS.

When Phase III is complete, the cost of preparing KAMS to accept material will be about \$39 million. The project saves the American taxpayer an estimated \$1.3 billion in avoided costs.